



Toledo Codex (Alphonso X, 1250)

Rosa das Rosas

Cantigas de Santa Maria #10

Llywelyn Gruffydd



(CSM 10 Image, 2005)

Overview

Rosa das Rosas is a widely misunderstood Cantiga de Santa Maria. It is from the collection published by the King of Castile Alphonso X, called El Sabio (the wise), in about 1250. Historians and performers have confused both the melody and lyrics. This paper presents my interpretations and explains why I think other musicologists have made mistakes.

Cantigas de Santa Maria

The cantigas (CSM) have been widely studied and are the best example of 13th century music in existence. The most famous analysis is by Walter Mettmann. (Mettmann, 1986) He established the numbering scheme that most musicians use today to refer to songs based on their order in the Escorial manuscript. For example, Rosa das Rosas is the tenth song there so it is referred to as CSM#10.

Manuscripts

- [E] the Escorial "codice princeps", held in the Real Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial outside Madrid. It includes 406 cantigas, and miniatures of performers and their instruments that appear before each tenth song.
- [T] the Escorial "codice rico" (rich codex), also in the El Escorial library, known as [T] from its manuscript signature. It contains 195 of the cantigas.
- [F] the "Florence" codex, now held in the National Central Library of Florence. It is unfinished, and contains the text of 104 cantigas but no music.
- [To] the "Toledo" codex, now in the National Library of Madrid. It includes 129 cantigas.

(Casson, Manuscripts, 2018)

This is the page in the Escorial codex containing Rosa das Rosas.



A todo altar a pos por emenda
 carne non dista ma se fes e laya
 tela ma no nãa. grolam i seiam
 certos q' vir audancia
 Poi q' nos a... sempre noit i
 via tela a emenbranca .en wma



noi en toller coitas i tones. amoz
 Rosa das rosas. i fivz das fivzes.

Hona tu s' honra. senor das senore
 tal senor de nome munt amar
 que de toz mal o por g' dar
 i por ell os peccados per dar.

Dosa das rosas. i fivz das fivzes
 hona das honas. senor das senore
 euemola munt amar i servir
 ta punna de nos guarair de falir

Esta e de looz de santa maria .co
 me firmosa i hãa .i a gran poder.

Rosa das rosas. i fivz das fivzes
 hona das honas. senor das senore
 sta wna que ceño por senoz
 i de que quero seer trobatoz
 se eu per un poll aver seu am
 tou ao temo os ourros amoie.
 Rosa das rosas i fivz das fivzes



Bona das rosas. i fivz
 das fivzes. wna das wnas. senor
 das senores. Rosa de telaid
 e de parcar. i fivz d'alegrã. i de pza

Esta e de como Santa maria tollei a
 alma do monge que ell' usfogara no no
 do temo. i fez eo ressoitar. am. q'

Mlear ome per
 folla. agnina

39r

(Lindahl, n.d.)

Notation

The music is written in *nuemes*, a non-mensural notation which specifies the pitch but does not specify the rhythm or duration of the notes. This has led to much discussion about how the *cantigas* should be performed. There are many arrangements available, and they differ widely. My setting is based on the manuscript, Casson's analysis (Casson, *Square Notation* (normalized), 2018), Several published arrangements, and several recordings. I combined elements of all of them using my understanding of the pronunciation of medieval Galician-Portuguese to determine the note length.

Oral Tradition

In his article "Kurt Schindler and the Tune of Alfonso X's *Cantiga 'Rosa das rosas'* in Oral Tradition" (Katz, 1990), Israel J. Katz traced the history of the melody. As the language changed, most of the *cantigas* were no longer sung. *Rosa das rosas* was an exception. In 1932, Kurt Schindler collected the song "in the town of Ceclavin, in western Cáceres near the Portuguese border" (Katz, 1990) His collection was published after his death as *Folk Music and Poetry of Spain and Portugal*, edited by Federico de Onís. (Schindler, 1941)

Schindler recognized the tune as the same one he had arranged and performed with the Schola Cantorum of New York at Carnegie Hall in 1920. This was probably the first performance of any *Cantiga de Santa Maria* in America. His arrangement was based on Luis Villalba's published arrangement from the manuscript. (Katz, 1990)

Medieval Galician-Portuguese

The rhythm of the text is analyzed in the Oxford database. "The refrain is best treated as a couplet of accentual lines, with four metrical accents to each line:

Rosa das rosas, flor das flores,
dona das donas, sennor das sennores"

(The Centre for the Study of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* of Oxford University, 2011)

Most translators confuse the Medieval Galician-Portuguese word "sennor" with the modern "señor". That leads them to the absurd translation "Lord of Lords" for the last phrase of the chorus. Casson speculates that "translators were influenced by the fact that the words "senhor" and "señor" in modern Portuguese and Galician are masculine nouns which refer only to men, whilst the female equivalent is "senhora" / "señora". Whilst that is true now, however, it was not so in the medieval language: *sennor* has its origins in a comparative adjective (= "older" or "senior" in English), and had no separate feminine form in the early medieval period." (Casson, *Cantiga 10: Rósa das rósas e Fror das froes*, 2018)

John Keller discovered and published a Castilian translation of the first 26 cantigas, which was likely done within 100 years of the original. (Katz, 1990) It used "Señora" for the earlier "sennor", showing the chorus as:

Rosa de las rosas e flor de las flores
e dueña de las dueñas, e Señora de las Señoras

Keller translated the chorus as:

Rose of roses, and flower of flowers
Lady of ladies, Queen of Queens

In my opinion, this is the most accurate translation.

Arrangement

Rosa das Rosas

Cantiga de Santa Maria #10 Alphonso X, Rey de Castile

Todd Marsh

Ro - sa das ro - sas e___ Fror___ das fro - res, Do - na das do - nas, Sen -

7 **Fine**
nor das sen - nor - es. Ro - sa de bel - dad' e___ de pa - re - cer e Fror d'a -
A - tal Sen - por dev' o - me muit' a - mar, que de to -
De - ve - mo - la___ muit' a - mar e ser - vir, ca pun - na

14
le - gri - a___ et de pra - zer, Do - na en mui pi - a - dos - a se - er
do___ mal o___ po - de guar - dar; e po - de - ll' os pec - ça - dos per - dõar,
de___ nos guar - dar de fa - lir; des i dos er - ros nos faz___ re - pen - tur,

21 **D.C. al Fine**
Sen - nor en to - ller___ coi - tas e do - o - res.
que faz ño - mun - do___ per ma - os sa - bo - res,
que nos fa - ze - mos com - e - pe - ca - dor - es.

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